United Nations A/63/PV.85

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

85th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 3 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cuba (Republic of Moldova), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 107 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolution (A/63/L.8/Rev.1)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on agenda item 107 jointly with agenda items 44 and 112 at the 51st plenary meeting, on 17 November 2008. Members will also recall that the Assembly adopted draft resolutions A/63/L.27, A/63/L.25/Rev.1 and A/63/L.64, at its 51st, 68th and 73rd plenary meetings, respectively.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nauru, who will introduce draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1.

Ms. Moses (Nauru): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States represented at the United Nations, namely the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, and my own country, Nauru.

It is a great honour for me to be here today to introduce our draft resolution, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", contained in document A/63/L.8/Rev.1. Since the issuance of the document, the following delegations have joined us as sponsors: Afghanistan, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Comoros, Dominica, Gabon, the Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Kiribati, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Serbia, Singapore, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America and Uruguay.

During the course of the past year, the sponsors of this resolution have involved the international community in extensive discussions on the security implications of climate change. We appreciate very much the support we have received from the members of the international community. Our particular gratitude goes to our fellow sponsors, and to Indonesia, which helped find a compromise text that will advance the international discussions on the matter of climate change and its possible security implications. In the light of the introduction of draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1, we hereby withdraw draft resolution A/63/L.8, entitled "Security and climate change".

We also thank the Like-Minded Group and the other participants active in the informal negotiations. They have all helped to enrich the discussion on this issue and have been instrumental in constructing this text.

Our special thanks goes out to the President of the General Assembly for his help in advancing our issues and for convening this groundbreaking meeting

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

09-35766 (E)

Please recycle

of the Assembly. We stand here at a historic moment — a confluence of firsts. This is both the first draft resolution for the Pacific small island developing States (Pacific SIDS) and the first General Assembly draft resolution on the security implications of climate change.

To understand the backdrop of the draft resolution, I wish to briefly talk first about the Pacific, a region that has been relentlessly threatened by the adverse impacts of climate change.

The islands of the Pacific SIDS range from Nauru, the world's smallest island nation, which covers only 21 square kilometres, to Papua New Guinea, the second largest island in the world, which covers about 309,000 square kilometres. Tuvalu, made up of four reef islands and five true atolls, is only 26 square kilometres. Tuvalu is the fourth smallest country in the world and only one tenth the size of Washington, D.C. There can be no doubt that most of our islands are very tiny indeed.

The vulnerability of our islands results from the small size of our homelands, coupled with the volume of the great ocean that surrounds us. Scientists have predicted that that ocean will continue to rise at an increasing rate. The Pacific Ocean, in which we have lived for centuries, will eventually leave little of our homelands behind if urgent action is not taken.

May I reiterate the sentiments of the Secretary-General at the meeting of the Pacific Forum leaders in Niue, expressed in a statement delivered on his behalf, that "climate change is not science fiction ... it is real and present".

While it is anticipated that most nations will ultimately suffer the adverse effects of climate change, small island States, including the Pacific SIDS, are already grappling with dire and immediate impacts today. The impacts on our nations include the inundation of coastal areas, where the majority of our people live, the submergence of islands, loss of freshwater supplies, saltwater intrusion, flooding, drought, damaged crops and failure of agriculture, diminution of biodiversity, destruction of critical infrastructure, and a substantial increase in the incidence of serious diseases. In many cases, those impacts will ultimately render Pacific island nations uninhabitable, destroying our unique and ancient cultures.

As the rest of the world continues to debate the security implications of climate change, for our peoples the problem is astoundingly real. And whilst some countries may have the resources to mitigate and transfer their people to safety during times of natural disaster, we do not have that luxury. Our citizens, literally, have nowhere to run. Communities on drowning islands throughout the Pacific are faced with a looming homelessness crisis due to rising sea levels. For some, the only viable option is to migrate. While many have already relocated, more are expected to follow as more of our islands eventually submerge.

Let us imagine a country submerging as a whole; let us consider its territorial sovereignty, its population and its Government. Those are fundamental considerations, which, under international law, define one's status as a State. Some of our Pacific countries are in danger of losing their populations and their land as a whole. They will cease to be States.

Never before has a United Nations Member State disappeared. Now we are faced with the threat of losing many owing to the adverse effects of climate change. Let us consider a country that has been deeply affected by severe drought, can no longer sustain itself because its hydropower is non-operational and its drinking water non-existent, and can no longer produce crops to feed its people. Let us consider a country that has too often been washed over by floods and affected by other natural disasters that have taken away every bit of hope that they have for their future. It is important to realize that there will come a time when no amount of aid will be able to insulate countries from the impacts of climate change. We will all suffer sooner or later. No country is immune to the impacts of climate change, and the smallest of the SIDS will be the first.

Clearly, the survival of States, their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the impact on their neighbours are matters of international peace and security. The melting of glaciers and the warming of the atmosphere and the oceans will have wide-ranging effects. Droughts, floods and other forms of extreme weather will become more frequent, threatening food supplies. Plants and animals that cannot adjust will die out. Sea levels are rising and will continue to do so, forcing hundreds of thousands of people in coastal zones to migrate.

Recent climate studies have shown that the pace of climate change is increasing and that the effects are sometimes worse than predicted. In only the past four years, scientists have revised predictions of an ice-free summer Arctic Ocean from 2105 to 2070 to 2039 to 2013. Terrifyingly, some climatic studies have begun to suggest that the worst-case scenarios of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change may be too conservative. These trends indicate that we may be facing a climate emergency far sooner than we thought. Addressing the security implications of climate change is overdue and the time to act is now.

Against that background, let me now introduce the draft resolution.

The draft resolution is simple and genuine. First and foremost, it refers to the security implications of the adverse impacts of climate change, which are already being felt in our region. Resettlements are already under way in the Pacific. The adoption of the draft resolution will prove that we are seriously concerned not only about the global environment but, more importantly, about the survival of whole populations and the existence of their lands, from which they derive their sense of belonging and identity.

The draft resolution looks at the adverse effects of climate change in a holistic manner. It points to the relevant resolutions adopted by the Second Committee, as well as to the purposes of the United Nations enshrined in Article 1 of our Charter. It further reiterates the roles of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The draft resolution also recalls the relevant United Nations frameworks in the field. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Declaration, the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) provide the framework for the draft resolution.

The preambular part of the resolution closes simply with a factual statement, namely, that the adverse impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, could have possible security implications. As I have pointed out, those implications are already being felt in our islands.

The draft resolution then invites all relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts in considering and addressing climate change. Read in connection with the third preambular paragraph, it becomes obvious that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council need to increase their efforts to address sustainable development issues as they relate to climate change. It is also clear that the Security Council has the responsibility to look at the security aspects, a view that we fully endorse.

Finally, the draft resolution calls for a comprehensive report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session on the possible security implications of climate change. It is particularly important that this report be based on the views of Member States and of the relevant regional and international organizations. The report will be the first of the Secretary-General to collect information on the security implications of climate change. We see the report as a critical first step as we move forward on this issue.

The disappearance of Pacific Islands is now projected to happen within our lifetime if we continue with business as usual. Conflicts are already being exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change and matters will only become worse. The planet will not wait patiently for further debates on the political aspects of this subject.

We are of the firm view that the adverse impacts of climate change have very real implications for international peace and security. We believe that the time is now opportune for all the organs of the United Nations to work collectively within their mandates and to intensify their efforts. The lives of real people from real places are at stake. The future survival of real generations, the continuation of real cultures and the security of belonging to a real homeland are being threatened.

Given the importance of the issue, it is my hope that A/63/L.8/Rev.1 will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: We will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mrs. Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to address the Assembly on the subject of draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", upon which we are about to take action. I speak on behalf of the following delegations: Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ecuador, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and my own country, Nicaragua.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce that our delegations have decided to join the consensus on the adoption of this draft resolution, which is the product of long and intense negotiations and cooperation between Member States.

Our group believes that draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1 is a compromise text that retains the common objective and unity of purpose of the universal membership of the General Assembly on issues related to climate change and that deals with the important subject of the possible security implications of climate change.

As we stated during the negotiations, we believe that, in the context of the issues dealt with in this draft resolution, it is vital that Member States promote sustainable development while adhering to the Rio principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and fully implementing Agenda 21 and other commitments undertaken at the Rio, Johannesburg and other relevant United Nations conferences.

In addition, we believe that these concerns and challenges are more profound and threatening than ever, because of the failure to fulfil the various commitments undertaken and the lack of political will to take concrete action in this regard. Therefore, we urge the developed countries to shoulder their legal, historical and moral responsibility to, inter alia, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We also urge them to fulfil their commitment to providing predictable financial resources and to transferring the necessary technology for confronting new threats and challenges, while ensuring that such technology is eco-friendly.

We reaffirm the unique role of the negotiating framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Kyoto Protocol and the role of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in dealing with sustainable development issues, including climate change and its associated challenges. We emphasize that draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1 recognizes that the role of the Security Council is limited only to the maintenance of international peace and security, in conformity with the United Nations Charter.

Our group shares the point of view and the concerns expressed in the letter dated 12 April 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Permanent Mission of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (S/2007/203) and in the letter dated 16 April 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Pakistan addressed to the President of the Security Council on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (S/2007/211), on the occasion of the open debate of 17 April 2007 on the item entitled "Energy, security and climate" (see S/PV.5663). In this respect, we emphasize that the Council must fully observe and comply with the mandate spelled out for it in the Charter and with its proper relationship with the General Assembly.

We are looking forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the possible security implications of climate change, which should be based on the views of Member States and of relevant regional and international organizations. We therefore request that, in preparing his report, the Secretary-General take into account the views we expressed in document A/63/L.30 in addition to any further notifications by our Member States on the subject.

Given the aforementioned facts, it is absolutely undeniable that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council are exclusively responsible for the course of action to be taken regarding the possible security implications of climate change. With this understanding, our group formally withdraws the amendments presented in document A/63/L.30.

The Acting President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1 is entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications". Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I should like to announce that, since

the submission of draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: the Bahamas, Ghana, Kiribati and Nigeria.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 63/281).

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Metela (Czech Republic): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Montenegro; as well as Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union warmly welcomes the adoption of resolution 63/281, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", and wishes to express its appreciation for the hard work and extraordinary effort made by the Pacific small island developing States in initiating the resolution and bringing the process to a successful conclusion. The European Union is pleased to note that a large number of countries have joined as sponsors. The sponsors of the resolution represent all regional groups and levels of development, demonstrating the global recognition of the challenge before us. The European Union would also like to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the spirit of compromise and flexibility demonstrated by all delegations during negotiations, allowing us to reach this landmark result today.

The European Union strongly believes that a global response to climate change is a critical element of international relations and will be increasingly so in the coming years, including in its security dimension. The risks posed by climate change are real and its impacts are already taking place. As this has become a global problem, the European Union advocates a multilateral response. The United Nations system must obviously play a pivotal role in that response. The adoption of this text is also a reminder of the urgent need for common action to fight climate change. The European Union, in this sense, remains firmly committed to reaching an ambitious global climate agreement at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen six months from now.

The impact of climate change on international security is a problem not of the future but already of today, and one that will stay with us. Climate change is already affecting the security of nations and populations around the globe. Even if progress is made in reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, weather patterns have already changed, global temperatures have already risen and, above all, climate change is already being felt everywhere, undermining livelihoods and fostering instability. There is growing evidence that the effects of climate changes can exacerbate and catalyse processes leading to tensions and eroding institutions.

The Security Council held its first debate on climate change and its implications for international security in 2007. The European Union is convinced that now is the time again to focus the attention of the international community on security risks related to climate change in the multilateral arena.

For some countries, climate change is an immediate threat to survival. A number of small island States already face significant threats to their territorial integrity due to receding coastlines and the submergence of whole areas of their territory. The plight of these States warrants the special attention of the world community. That is one of the reasons why the European Union supported the resolution proposed by the Pacific small island developing States from the very first draft.

However, the European Union also sees climate change as a universal threat that will create new security dynamics and risks in all regions — between States and within States — by intensifying conflicts over depleting or scarce resources, by causing economic damage and adding pressure to critical infrastructure, and also by amplifying or triggering environmentally induced migration, thus increasing pressure on international governance.

Therefore, many of the most vulnerable developing States and regions will face significant additional challenges to achieving stability and sustainable development. New threats to human

security will emerge. The European Union's own external policies have evolved to take into account the new security dynamics unleashed by climate change.

As the security implications of climate change are clearly of a global nature, affecting developed and developing countries alike, the European Union believes that, by adopting the resolution on climate change and its possible security implications, the United Nations membership has made a first important step towards considering and addressing security risks related to climate change.

We look forward to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report, which will help us to understand and analyse various aspects of this complex issue, and to the attention that the relevant organs of the United Nations will devote to climate change and its security implications.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Arab States to express their views on resolution 63/281.

The Arab Group believes that the developing countries — and in particular the least developed, the African, the landlocked developing and the small island developing countries — are those most severely impacted by climate change. The Arab Group joined in the consensus adoption of the resolution, entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications", and stresses the following points.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the responsibility first and foremost of the Security Council pursuant to its mandate under the Charter, with due consideration for the role of the General Assembly under resolution 377 (V) of 3 November 1950. The overlap between the roles of the Security Council and the principal organs of the United Nations is in contradiction to the purposes andprinciples of the Charter and may undermine their respective mandates and the rights of the Organization's membership.

Climate change has an ineluctable effect on sustainable development and its three main pillars: economic development, social development and the protection of the environment. It should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Climate change is of central importance to sustainable development. Promoting sustainable development is the primary responsibility of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their relevant subsidiary bodies, including the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Environment Programme. A binding multilateral climate change agreement exists: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol. In none of this is any role envisaged for the Security Council.

We believe that it is important for all Member States to promote sustainable development by adhering to the Rio principles, in particular that of shared but differentiated responsibility, to work towards full implementation of Agenda 21 and to fulfil commitments with respect to the provision of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building for developing countries, as pledged at the Rio, Johannesburg and other relevant United Nations conferences in the economic and social sphere.

The Arab Group affirms that the Framework Convention on Climate Change provides the appropriate forum for addressing climate change and considering the measures needed to address climate change in accordance with the principles set out in the Convention. The developed countries must take urgent steps to honour their pledges to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol. Those countries that have not yet done so should accede to the Protocol as soon as possible and actively participate in the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference to be held in December.

The Arab Group aligns itself with the letters sent by the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China (S/2007/211) and the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement (S/2007/203) addressed to the President of the Security Council on the occasion of the Council's open debate on energy, security and climate held on 17 April 2007.

We stress that, in keeping with the resolution adopted today, the report of the Secretary-General should take into consideration the views of Member States and regional organizations with respect to climate change. We stress too that today's resolution should not undermine the jurisdiction or mandates of the bodies or organizations responsible for addressing climate change.

Mr. Mérorès (Haiti): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 14 States members of

the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). The States members of CARICOM, in solidarity with the group of Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) Group joined as sponsors of draft resolution A/63/L.8/Rev.1, on climate change and its possible security implications.

CARICOM shares with other small island and low-lying costal States an acute awareness of the reality of the impacts of climate change. The incidence and intensity of natural disasters and other climate-related impacts have increased significantly in recent times. The group therefore considers that there is need to increasingly expand understanding and appreciation of the impacts of climate change and to address its attendant challenges in a coordinated, resolute, effective and sustainable manner.

Since SIDS disproportionately bear the brunt of the climate change challenge, CARICOM welcomes the resolution's reaffirmation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Mauritius Declaration and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

In combating the formidable challenge posed by climate change, small island developing States especially stand in need of all possible understanding and support. The possible security implications of climate change provide an additional emerging and disconcerting dimension of the challenge. Indeed, for many of our countries, climate change poses an existential threat — a threat to our very survival. An urgent and comprehensive approach is needed, involving the full participation of all States. For this purpose, our countries attach high importance to the process in train under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and welcome the reaffirmation of the Convention as the key instrument for addressing climate change.

The resolution raises a sense of deep concern that the adverse impacts of climate change, including sea level rise, could have possible security implications. We take this opportunity to thank the Pacific small island developing States for bringing the issue formally for consideration within the context of the United Nations.

We recognize that there might be different perceptions as to the nature and scope of the challenges highlighted by the resolution. In that regard, we anticipate that the comprehensive report to be provided by the Secretary-General can provide a platform for the further consideration of the issue at the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. CARICOM hopes to contribute its own views and perspectives to the report and to future debates on these questions.

CARICOM members have participated actively and constructively in the protracted negotiations on the resolution that the Assembly has just adopted, and we therefore join in commending the Assembly for having adopted it by consensus.

Mr. Natelagawa (Indonesia): Among the many issues which demand a united common response from Member States, including from the General Assembly, is the challenge of climate change. Over the past two years, leading up to the Bali Climate Change Conference, held in December 2007, we have seen that the General Assembly can play a crucial role in promoting unity of purpose on this issue. It is in that light that my delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus of the resolution entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications".

Indonesia recognizes the urgent need to address climate change. We fully understand that the impact of climate change is multidimensional and may include possible security implications. As the world's largest archipelagic State, comprising more than 17,000 islands, the effects of climate change on Indonesia could be a matter of continued existence for many of our islands, people, cultures and ways of life.

From that point of view, Indonesia understands the concern raised by the Pacific island developing States. Sea level rise triggered by climate change could set off a chain reaction which could adversely impact small island developing States, including the possible submergence of islands and territory and the displacement of millions of people.

However, gathering the relevant data and establishing a direct link between climate change and its possible security implications require further study and cooperation by all nations. Against this backdrop, Indonesia is of the view that the request to the Secretary-General contained in the resolution to submit a report on this subject matter is key to understanding the linkage between climate and security, if, after all,

there is any. In this regard, we encourage Member States to submit their views on this complex matter, as requested by the resolution. That will ensure that the richness of observations in the report is maintained.

Inviting all relevant organs of the United Nations within their mandates to intensify their efforts in addressing climate change will allow to work in a coordinated manner, which will strengthen the capacity of small island developing States to face the challenges posed by climate change.

Indonesia believes that the issue of climate change is, above all, a sustainable development issue. The challenge of climate change is therefore a challenge to our development efforts.

Let me conclude by saying that the issue before us is a complex one. Addressing this issue in the appropriate frameworks — the General Assembly and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change — will provide all States Members of the United Nations the opportunity to deliberate in a comprehensive manner, which, we hope, will result in beneficial solutions for millions of people.

We align ourselves fully with the letter dated 12 April 2007 addressed to the President of the Security Council by Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (S/2007/203) and the letter dated 16 April 2007 from Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (S/2007/211).

Mr. Muller (Marshall Islands): On behalf of His Excellency President Litokwa Tomeing and the people of the Marshall Islands, I bring warm greetings to the General Assembly. The Republic of the Marshall Islands supports and aligns itself with the statement of the Republic of Nauru, whose representative spoke on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands fully acknowledges the complexities of the possible security implications of climate change. The issue of climate change poses unprecedented questions for the international community and thus requires a coherent response by all within a cooperative framework and involving cross-sectoral actions to address development aspirations as well as security issues.

For a low-lying island nation like the Marshall Islands, climate change also poses some very clear and obvious questions with respect to our very existence. The security implications of climate change pose a direct and very real threat to our sovereignty, survival and fundamental freedoms assured by the Charter of the United Nations. No longer can Member States afford to consider that the loss of entire nations does not create a critical threat to global international security.

The Republic of the Marshall Islands is proud that the General Assembly has been able to work together on resolution 63/281 in a spirit of positive cooperation. The resolution expresses serious global concern over the survival of entire populations and their land in the face of climate impacts. By addressing climate change in a holistic fashion, we ensure that United Nations organs treat this issue with appropriate urgency and within the respective mandates of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. We also seek the active engagement of all nations in addressing other climate interlinkages, including the human dimension of climate change and its implications for sustainable development and the law of the sea.

This resolution was initiated by a group of small island nations in the Pacific that are acutely vulnerable to climate impacts. For Pacific islands, climate change exists not only in the lens of a scientist, but in the very visible effects already observed by our communities. Our Pacific Islands Forum leaders identified the security implications of climate change last August in the Niue Declaration, and last September our leaders collectively urged that this body properly acknowledge the security implications of climate change. Last week, our leaders emerged from the Fifth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in Hokkaido with an initiative by the Pacific Environment Community, in which Japan will be working closely with Pacific Islands Forum partners to support practical, Pacific-tailored approaches to combating climate change. The Pacific Islands Forum and the European Union also issued a joint declaration in 2008 on shared commitments with regard to climate change, and additional discussions are under way with other partners, including developing nations.

All nations, and particularly the most vulnerable nations, may face intensified climate impacts, including competition for increasingly scarce resources, which may pose serious barriers for some to achieving international development goals. We urge all nations to fully express their views in the report of the Secretary-General called for in the resolution. In addition, we expect that the report will further detail

practical strategies through which the United Nations as a whole can proactively address these potential implications now and with due urgency.

In the low-lying Marshall Islands, we cannot move our people to higher ground, for we have no mountains. As a nation and a culture closely dependent upon our oceans and coastal areas, we cannot simply replace these areas or move our communities to less vulnerable locations on coral atolls that are already so thin that one can stand in the lagoon and see the waves crashing clear across the other side of the atoll.

As the Marshall Islands' highest point is only two metres above sea level, even the most conservative 2007 scientific projections of the United Nations scientific body, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), of a sea level rise of 20 to 30 centimetres before the next century, clearly indicate — and with certainty — that our national survival is threatened by an upheaval that would overwhelm our very land, our basic water and food security, as well as the pillars of our traditional culture. The worst-case scenarios offered by the IPCC of a sea level rise greater than half a metre pose even more severe threats to our existence.

Most recently, the IPCC scientific coordinator on sea level rise stated that the IPCC findings are likely to be "biased low" and that new research shows that the risk of ice sheet melts, which are already being observed, would lead to an increase of four metres or greater in sea level rise. Other scientists have further revised this analysis and recently issued a claim that ice sheet-related total sea level rise may be at a lesser rate of only three metres. That can hardly be considered good news, as it is a rate of change which nonetheless will completely submerge my nation.

The existence of a tipping point leaves us with a very small window for urgent international action, perhaps as little as 10 years, to avoid irreversible and abrupt climate impacts. The people of the Marshall Islands hope and pray that we will not reach this point of no return. For the Republic of the Marshall Islands, this situation is more than just a development barrier.

The Marshallese people have not taken these threats silently; instead, we are actively confronting climate impacts. Despite our capacity limitations as a developing nation, like our Pacific neighbours we are taking action and remain committed to building our resilience to combat the effects of climate change by prioritizing, among other goals, water security, energy conservation, the conservation of traditional plants and non-invasive crops to address coastal erosion, and food security by promoting climate-sensitive strategies. We are also committed to implementing ecosystem approaches to adaptation, such as the Micronesia Challenge, which is a subregional commitment to conserving 30 per cent of our near-shore marine and 20 per cent of our terrestrial resources.

We are also doing our part to implement renewable energy strategies to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, even though they are already practically nil. We are revising our national energy policy as the foundation for meeting our commitment to significantly improving energy efficiency and to reducing our reliance on oil through utilizing practical and affordable renewable energy resources.

We seek to continue to work with our partners to build our national capacity to take on and manage projects and, at the same time, are implementing concrete strategies. Yet, we cannot fully remedy or reduce climate impacts, including security implications, without the ability to efficiently access funding for adaptation and mitigation that appropriately focuses on concrete results, and without a meaningful commitment to funding based on the "polluter pays" principle. Funding streams must be set aside and dedicated to the most vulnerable nations, with direct and simplified access.

We find some of the strongest support for our survival in the principles of the United Nations Charter, in its commitment to fundamental freedoms and in the respective mandates of the relevant organs, including those of the Security Council, to address security issues. It is also inarguably within customary international law that, like all Member nations, we are bound to commit to the continued existence and survival of the most vulnerable among us.

We wish to thank Member nations for their support in arriving at a consensus on today's resolution. The Republic of the Marshall Islands again expresses its gratitude for the awareness and commitment of all nations to this vital issue.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): This is quite a historic day for the General Assembly and it has been a very long time coming. I recall when negotiations on resolution 63/281 commenced last summer. At that time, there was a lot of discussion among us on what

the resolution was really about — whether it was really about climate change, security or development. I think that, in the end, we realized that it was about all those things, but mostly it was really about respect — respect for some of the smallest and least powerful States represented in this General Assembly.

These are not countries that usually make a lot of noise in this Hall. They do not usually come to us asking for much. In fact, generally, our experience with these countries is that it is usually us asking them for things — usually to vote for this or that. But, on this occasion, they came to us asking for something fundamentally important, as eloquently expressed by the Permanent Representative of Nauru.

I think it speaks well of us and of our processes that we were able to rise to that challenge. The negotiations were long and at times quite difficult. It is worth reflecting that our dear friend, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Palau, was able, during the course of those negotiations, to conceive, carry to term and give birth to a child before we concluded our negotiations. But, luckily, we adopted the resolution before the child was old enough to make a statement here.

There are congratulations that need to be made here today as well. First of all, I think that we need to congratulate the Pacific island countries themselves for the quiet determination and dignity with which they conducted the negotiations. I think that it is also important to congratulate the negotiating partners and, in particular, I would like to congratulate those countries that initially were not enthusiastic about aspects of the resolution but that decided on principle not to block it. To those, I say thank you.

Finally, congratulations need to go to one delegation in particular. At a time when things really looked as if they might go off the rails, one delegation, that of Indonesia, took it on itself to play a crucial brokering role to bring us together in terms of a compromise resolution, which is largely the resolution that we have adopted here today. I think that we are in their debt.

I said at the beginning that this was a historic day. It is historic for a few reasons. First of all, it is the first time that the Pacific island countries have brought a resolution such as this to the General Assembly. But, more importantly, it is historic because, in the resolution, we have agreed for the first time by consensus on the link between climate change and security. This is a link that is being discussed broadly in academic papers and security documents in many capitals around the world, but it is the first time that we have formally made that link here — and I think that that is very important, and important to reflect on.

Australia recognizes that climate change is a serious, long-term global challenge that, if not dealt with effectively, is likely to exacerbate the intensity and complexity of security-related risks, such as border disputes over resources, displaced populations and disaster management. For that reason, we have contributed some $150 million to a fund within our own region to assist with the adaptation and mitigation efforts. But, as we have heard today, in our region the Pacific island countries are among the most vulnerable, possessing limited capacity to adapt.

We look forward to receiving in due course the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General on this matter that we have requested today. I think that the report has the potential to be among the most interesting and most important reports produced at this next session. We also look forward to seeing the relevant organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council, take this issue up as appropriate.

This resolution is indeed an important and historic step, but only one small step in the work that we have ahead of us to deal with this very important issue. However, I think that we have taken a good step and that it is important for us to take a moment to congratulate ourselves on this important day.

Mrs. Yang (Palau): Palau would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (Pacific SIDS). We are proud of the statement and of resolution 63/281, "Climate change and its possible security implications". We would like to thank the international community for adopting the resolution by consensus.

We are past the point of debating whether climate change is real, man-made and fundamentally altering the future of human civilization. In Palau, freshwater resources are dwindling and becoming salinated by salt water. Fields of taro — the food supplies on which my country relies — are being inundated by rising tides. And our culture, which has thrived, developed and endured since the times of Homer and the ancient Greeks, faces the real possibility of being wiped out.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other scientific bodies report that if nothing is done, we will face a future marred by famine, droughts, massive refugee problems, border disputes, energy emergencies and humanitarian crises more desperate and tragic than those confronting us today.

We do not carelessly call climate change a security threat. When we are told by scientists to prepare for humanitarian crises, including exodus, in our lifetimes, how can anyone say that it is different from preparing for a threat like war? Even Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has compared the effects of climate change to those of war.

What is most important is that we know the cause of climate change. It is we, when we continue to emit carbon even though we know it is warming the Earth. And it is we, the General Assembly, when we fail to act to stop this crisis from unfolding. In the years ahead, we will be judged by how we reacted when confronted with this knowledge.

This resolution is a first step towards changing our direction, but it is only a first step. We must not rest on our achievements, but must look towards the next steps so that we do not lose our momentum, our sense of purpose or our urgency in tackling this enormous problem.

When expert panels predict that flooding, disease and famine will lead to unprecedented migration, we must move to action. When our peoples are bearing witness to drought and crop failures, which intensify competition for food and water, we must move to action. When we face the potential for economic and political disruption on a scale not seen since the Second World War, we must move to action.

All the organs of the United Nations must act urgently. We include most particularly the Security Council, whose solemn charge is to be the primary defender of international peace and security. We believe that in the coming days, the international community must begin a dialogue on what the United Nations can and should do. We hope this dialogue will provide the focus, leadership and direction needed for the task at hand. We are honoured to be part of that dialogue, for through dialogue and discussion we can set an agenda for action that can bring us back from the brink of this nightmare.

The Security Council must seize itself of the broad issue of climate change and security and chart a way forward. As we know, the Council has a vast array of tools with which it may address this threat. We have seen the Council, in the days following 11 September 2001, call upon all States to become parties to international covenants and protocols relating to terrorism and to increase cooperation to better address the threat. Could the Council not consider similar action on climate change conventions and protocols?

We have seen the Council acknowledge the security threat posed by HIV/AIDS and integrate the consideration of this thematic issue into their resolutions on peacekeeping. Climate change is acknowledged to be the epitome of a cross-cutting issue and consideration of it and its effects could be integrated into Council resolutions.

We have seen the Council form subsidiary bodies on topics ranging from Africa, to terrorism to children and armed conflict. These subsidiary bodies address broad issues, where the harm does not stop at the border of one nation. The same can be said of greenhouse gases, the harmful effects of which do not stop at the edge of the emitting country, but put into jeopardy neighbours, such as the small islands. The Pacific small island developing States are among those nations least responsible for the problem, yet we will be among the first to disappear.

Under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council may investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute. Could we not envision the Council immediately investigating the security implications of climate change and recommending appropriate procedures or methods of adjustment if it determines that the situation might endanger international peace and security? Recommendations already exist in the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but they desperately need the strong backing of the Council so that they may become binding on countries that act only when they must, rather than when they should.

The solution to the climate crisis will involve many facets, but it must involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other sources of climate change. Reducing emissions must therefore be the focus of the Council's deliberations, and the goal of the Council must be effective, enforceable action to that end.

If the Council is able to recommend enforcement mechanisms for reducing carbon emissions, the root cause of so many future humanitarian disasters will finally be addressed and possibly averted. By adopting this resolution, we acknowledge that climate change is a threat to international peace and security. Now, the Council must acknowledge this as well and do what it can and must do to maintain or restore international peace and security.

If the Council discusses the ways in which it can apply its many tools and vast resources to reducing carbon emissions and then takes appropriate action, it will have lived up to its responsibility and mandate as the world's guardian of international peace and security.

We believe that our voices are particularly salient on this issue, because our shorelines will be among the first to be inundated, our fresh water among the first to be corrupted and our histories and cultures among the first to be destroyed if carbon emissions are not curtailed. We are asking the Security Council to consider our peace and our security when it seizes itself of this issue.

We have supported peace and security efforts around the world by sending peacekeepers to Darfur and Timor-Leste and by heeding the call of the Council to action to address the threat of terrorism. This time, our peace and security are at stake, and we need the Council's help.

Mr. Pita (Tuvalu): Today has special meaning for the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) and for Tuvalu, as it is the first time in the history of the United Nations that this body has considered a resolution on climate change and its possible security implications. I am therefore honoured to speak on behalf of the Government of Tuvalu in fully supporting the adoption of the Pacific SIDS resolution by consensus.

At the outset, Tuvalu wishes to align itself with the Pacific SIDS statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Nauru to the United Nations and Chair of the Pacific SIDS. We also wish to convey our sincere thanks to all the Member States that willingly supported and sponsored the resolution. The adoption of the Pacific SIDS resolution by consensus today is a milestone and clear testimony that climate change is a global phenomenon that undoubtedly has security implications affecting all countries, especially the most vulnerable small island States, such as Tuvalu.

Climate change is certainly the most serious threat to global security and the survival of humankind. In particular, it is an issue of enormous concern to a highly vulnerable small island State and low-lying atoll nations such as Tuvalu, which resides right at the edge of existence. Climate change is a matter of life and death, and it certainly is a security issue from our perspective — one that could very well push us over that edge.

The people of Tuvalu recently celebrated their thirtieth year of independence. While we are a very young country, we are a very old society, with a history stretching back more than 3,000 years. We have thrived primarily on subsistence fishing and farming, and, while our traditional way of life has kept our families fed for many generations, it has never been tested by a crisis as large as the one presented by climate change. Tuvalu is not a contributor to the root cause of climate change, yet its people must bear the adverse impacts of a crisis caused by the actions of other countries.

The low-lying islands of Tuvalu are extremely vulnerable to sea level rise. The highest point on any of Tuvalu's islands sits at no more than five metres above sea level, with most of the islands at less than three metres. Recent research forecasts sea level to rise by as much as a metre or more by the end of this century. Such a development would be truly catastrophic for Tuvalu, but even a fraction of that will lead to considerable hardship and suffering.

Sea level rise is also threatening our water security, as saltwater contaminates our limited supply of groundwater, which is critical for maintaining public health and sanitation and for growing our food. The increased salinity has destroyed many of our traditional pulaka pit gardens and is forcing us to adopt more salt-resistant crops.

Climate change also threatens the abundant coral reefs that surround Tuvalu and support our subsistence fishing activities. Rising ocean temperatures can cause bleaching events, leaving a reef lifeless. Carbon dioxide emissions are also changing the chemistry of the oceans. In a more acidic ocean, corals find it increasingly difficult to form their exoskeletons and are more vulnerable to disease, parasites and predators. Taken together, coral bleaching and ocean acidification place a significant portion of Tuvalu's food supply in

jeopardy. Signs of reef failure in Tuvalu are already abundant, and fish populations around coral reefs have experienced a significant drop in their numbers.

This resolution comes at a critical time. Scientists tell us that we can still avoid the worst effects of climate change, but that strong action must be taken now. It is therefore paramount that the international community honour its commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which were reaffirmed in the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and again under the Mauritius Strategy.

Climate change is a serious and destabilizing force that threatens the security of Tuvalu and every other Member State. The early effects are being felt most acutely within the borders of poor countries, but they will soon spill over into nearby countries as their neighbours run out of food and clean water. Tuvaluans have been among the first to taste the destructive potential of climate change, but we will not be the last. It is for this reason that Tuvalu urges the Security Council and other relevant organs of the United Nations to treat this issue with the urgency that a security threat of this magnitude deserves.

Ms. Graham (New Zealand): My delegation wishes to add our voice in support of resolution 63/281, adopted by consensus this morning.

In 2008, New Zealand, along with other Pacific Island Forum members, adopted the Niue Declaration on Climate Change. At that time, our leaders expressed deep concerns about

> "the serious current impacts of and growing threat posed by climate change to the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being and security of Pacific Island countries; and that current and anticipated changes in the Pacific climate, coupled with the region's vulnerability, are expected to exacerbate existing challenges and lead to significant impacts on Pacific countries' environments, their sustainable development and future survival".

The resolution adopted today is historic, and it is certainly a step in the right direction of addressing these concerns. In particular, New Zealand looks forward to the Secretary-General's comprehensive report on the possible security implications of climate change.

My delegation wishes to express our sincere appreciation to Indonesia for its helpful role in breaking the deadlock by producing a text that brought about a consensus. Let me also thank the Like-Minded Group and the Pacific small island developing States for showing the flexibility that has enabled us to reach a consensus. We thank, too, the many other delegations that have worked tirelessly and patiently to reach such a successful conclusion on this resolution.

Mrs. Beck (Solomon Islands): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting and for facilitating the adoption of resolution 63/281. My delegation would like to speak on the objectives, principles and commitment of the resolution and take the opportunity to thank its sponsors and those that supported it. My delegation would also like to thank those that participated in the negotiations.

The resolution was intensively negotiated over months, and its adoption by consensus today sends an important message of hope to the most vulnerable populations in the Pacific and that their daily struggles are not forgotten.

Before going any further, I would like to align this statement with the statement introducing the resolution delivered by the representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS).

The resolution just adopted by the General Assembly speaks of the adverse impact of climate change, which is accelerating at rate that is now posing human security, food security, water security, health security and striking dominant security threats in countries of the Pacific. It has triggered migratory movements as more and more people become displaced through shoreline erosion, coastal flooding, agriculture disruption and increase of king tides within the Pacific, and especially among Solomon Islands' low-lying islands. I would add that Solomon Islands is already emerging from ethnic conflict and would like to see stability maintained.

The recent report on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change identifies these climate change security threats. The resolution calls on the United Nations system to deal with these threats. It is our hope that, by having the United

Nations principal organs, including the Security Council, deal with climate change-induced security threats, the resolution will allow the United Nations to be proactive and to do more before we arrive at a point where these threats become serious and irreversible.

Our time frame under the Kyoto Protocol is not sufficient for reducing harmful gas emissions into our environment. One of the objectives of the resolution is to bring to the international community's attention the fact that SIDS and least developed countries (LDCs), particularly those of the Pacific, are ill equipped to combat the impact of climate change. The resolution also builds a political momentum for current negotiations, beginning in Bonn this week, on the Bali Action Plan, to which we all attach much importance.

The principles and basis of the resolution are intended to help us address collectively these security threats by taking anticipatory precautionary measures to prevent and minimize the threats. The resolution also promotes sustainable development to better enable those on the front line of climate change to better respond to these threats with technology transfers and sufficient funds to carry out mitigation and adaptation programmes. My delegation takes this opportunity to acknowledge Italy, Austria, the city of Milan, Turkey and Taiwan for their support for the ongoing regional and bilateral community- and rural-focused renewable energy programmes in Solomon Islands.

Solomon Islands navigate, thrive and survive on global cooperation. Thus, the resolution adopted today calls for the widest possible cooperation of all Member States. The sponsors and supporters of the resolution are from all six regions of our membership. We are very grateful for their support.

The commitment made in the resolution is to ensure that it remains a living document and that the international system has an effective institutional arrangement to undertake periodic reporting on the measurable climate change threats, especially to SIDS and LDCs, and to have the membership fully engage and maintain a deep sense of responsibility for addressing them. Deeper actions with nationally strong and appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures are necessary to address the threats in an effective and sustained manner.

Let me close by quoting our Secretary-General's acceptance speech, in which he stated that "[t]he true measure of success for the United Nations is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most" (*A/61/PV.31, p. 9*). In this connection, the resolution adopted today is a 911 call for assistance from a group of States that need the United Nations most.

Mr. Vunibobo (Fiji): Fiji welcomes this opportunity to make this statement after the adoption of resolution 63/281, submitted by the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS), on climate change and its possible security implications.

My delegation supports and endorses the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific SIDS and other sponsors of the resolution. We deeply appreciate and value their unwavering support, and we pay tribute to the Assembly for adopting the resolution by consensus.

When we started this initiative, little did we realize that we would ruffle some feathers and unintentionally step on some sensitive toes. We apologize for that breach of good manners.

We were encouraged by the reception accorded to us by the five permanent members of the Security Council. We were never given a lecture by any one of them; we were given advice and suggestions. On reflection, that particular reception on the part of the permanent members of the Security Council gave us enormous courage to press on despite looming difficulties. A reading of the list of co-sponsors speaks volumes about the intensity of our lobbying efforts, but more important it is testimony of human solidarity, for the original sponsors of the resolution are among the smallest and most vulnerable States Members of the United Nations.

Looking back over the past 12 months or so, our draft resolution generated widespread discussion and debate. However, the adoption of the resolution by consensus is a tribute to all those who had been concerned by the long and drawn-out consultation. Equally important, it is recognition on the part of the international community that it has acknowledged that the issue of climate change cannot and should not be viewed in isolation.

This resolution, we believe, touches a wide area of concern to the human family. It touches economic, social, demographic and political interests, and above all issues of international peace and security. At the end of the day, these concerns are part of the matrix that

affects our lives — and for us in the Pacific, our survival and the protection of our identity, our traditions and our culture.

For small island States, the security implications of climate change have been, first and foremost, a threat to our very existence as sovereign nations. All else will be immaterial if statehood is lost — lost through rising sea levels and warming seas caused by climate change. It is for small island States, a clear and present danger, a zero-sum game, if you will, that may just decide their future membership of this Assembly.

Our situation bears some parallel to the current global financial and economic crisis. Small island States have become victims of a devastating phenomenon not of their own making. Having said that, we have no desire to apportion blame. We must however acknowledge the past in order to address the present and plan for the future. We fully recognize that climate change is a global problem that requires a concerted global plan of action. This resolution is but one of the many plans needed to address the existential threat posed by climate change.

Fiji therefore is pleased that the General Assembly has adopted this resolution by consensus. We invite the United Nations and all its relevant organs, including the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and indeed the Security Council, within their respective mandates, to redouble their efforts in addressing the issue of climate change and its possible security implications. The journey to Copenhagen is thus strengthened.

To conclude, allow me once again, on behalf of my delegation and indeed on behalf of our Pacific community, to thank the Assembly for adopting the resolution by consensus.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The topic of climate change and its security implications is of urgent relevance. The security threat posed by climate change is real and its impacts are of global nature, affecting both developed and developing countries.

An impressive body of scientific evidence now tells us that even a relatively small rise in global temperatures can markedly exacerbate drought, water scarcity and destructive weather events, and can thus provoke the spread of disease, food shortages, human migration and competition for natural resources. Small island States are facing particular risk. Receding coastlines, for instance, can result in the loss of territory or even the disappearance of entire countries.

Even though climate change is not the only cause of all these phenomena, we cannot afford to turn a blind eye on the additional risks it poses. We will have to maintain and increase our efforts to face its implications in terms of security at all levels. Switzerland supports any effort within the United Nations to attract the attention of the international community to security risks related to climate change. For that reason, my country joined in sponsoring the draft resolution proposed by the Pacific small island developing States and welcomes its unanimous adoption this morning.

However, we regret that the extensive and laborious negotiation process has only resulted in a weak reference to the Security Council. Given the seriousness of the issue, we would have preferred a strong reference to the Security Council. The Council, in our view, has a role to play in fighting climate change and addressing its security implications.

We thank the Pacific small island developing States for their tenacity, patience and skill in this negotiation process. We look forward to continuing to work together with them and all other interested parties on this very important issue.

Mr. Osuga (Japan): I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the adoption of the present resolution by consensus. The challenges of climate change and its possible security implications are now our shared concern. Japan particularly welcomes the solidarity demonstrated through the resolution to the small island countries facing growing threats to the well-being and security of their people as a result of climate change.

Japan commends the initiative taken by the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) and their tenacity and perseverance in getting this resolution through after lengthy negotiations. Japan reaffirmed its support to the Pacific SIDS by deciding to join in sponsoring the draft resolution at a very early stage. Our solidarity was highlighted just 10 days ago, when the fifth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Japan and the Premier of Niue as the Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), was held in Hokkaido, Japan.

In this meeting, the leaders of Japan and the PIF expressed their resolve to pursue the shared objective of ensuring a secure, resilient and more prosperous region. To that end, Japan committed itself to provide $500 million to Pacific island countries over the next three years to assist them in the following areas: environment and climate change, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and promoting human security, and overcoming economic vulnerabilities.

Climate change hits the most vulnerable countries in the world. In our endeavours to reach agreement in Copenhagen, we should take fully into account the need to help the most vulnerable countries combat and adapt to climate change. The Government of Japan, for its part, will continue to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries through the Cool Earth Partnership.

Climate change affects the most vulnerable and poorest people and communities in the world and within a country. Adaptation to climate change, including disaster preparedness and prevention related to sea-level rise, calls for a human security approach to enhance resilience at the community level. For this reason, we have added climate change to the agenda of the sixth Friends of Human Security meeting, to be held tomorrow morning, 4 June, under the co-chairmanship of Japan and Mexico. I encourage all delegations to participate in tomorrow's meeting. In our view, Friends of Human Security can be one of the informal yet practical and useful platforms to consider and address the possible security implications of climate change.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada wishes to congratulate the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) for their leadership in bringing the important issue of security and climate change to the forefront of our work at the United Nations. All the Pacific SIDS delegations have spoken with great conviction and cogency today. The process of bringing forward a resolution in the General Assembly is often laborious, but the time, energy, and challenges are far greater when the concept being introduced is a novel one, as in the present case.

The global challenge of climate change requires a global response, and Canada is committed to reaching a comprehensive and ambitious agreement in Copenhagen this December. The current resolution 63/281 is an affirmation of our collective recognition of the possible security implications of climate change. The existential threat facing the Pacific small islands, in particular, gives this important issue a very real, urgent and human dimension.

Canada welcomes the calls for the relevant United Nations bodies to intensify their efforts in considering the possible security implications of climate change. We also note that the Secretary-General's comprehensive report will help shape views of Member States on this important issue and provide useful context to inform our work.

Let me close by once again thanking the Pacific small island developing States for their leadership and foresight, and for the collaboration of the more than 90 sponsors of the resolution. I would also like to thank the Like-Minded Group and other active delegations for their flexibility and constructive dialogue. Finally, let me pay tribute, as others have done, to the delegation of Indonesia for the positive bridging role it played at a crucial time in the negotiations.

Mr. Elisaia (Samoa): As the last speaker from among the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) to take the floor, allow me on their behalf to thank the General Assembly, under the visionary leadership of its President, for successfully adopting by consensus the resolution entitled "Climate change and its possible security implications" (resolution 63/281).

This is a momentous occasion in the life of our Organization and a high point in the continuing efforts of the Pacific SIDS to underscore the existential threat posed by the adverse effects of climate change to our smaller and more vulnerable island countries. History will vindicate the Assembly's strength of conviction as demonstrated by the adoption of the consensus resolution today.

A year ago, when the draft resolution was first introduced, achieving the result that we have just witnessed was considered untenable, far-fetched and naive. Even a few weeks ago, a consensus resolution remained all but elusive, and our Pacific SIDS members were beginning to question whether we had the perseverance and determination to pull this one off.

But persevere we did. Determined we were. Compromise and accommodation we practised. For true to our sense of moral and ethical obligation to our Pacific islanders, who have already been and will soon

be victims of the impacts of climate change, we continued to tell our story as truthfully as we saw it, untroubled by whether people thought foul of us and our motives. For there was no ulterior aim, no aim other than to share the truth with the rest of the world. After all, some of our members have the high moral ground and can insist on having their stories told from their simple perspectives, uncluttered by other agendas, world dynamics and unfounded concerns.

Looking back now, any doubts we might have had about a successful outcome are truly water under the bridge, for actions speak louder than words. Through the unanimous adoption of this resolution, the General Assembly has rewarded our resolve with its trust and repaid our fortitude with its confidence and faith.

For those Member States that believed in and stood by us from day one, through the thick and thin of the negotiations, no reward suffices because none was expected. In the Assembly, the Pacific SIDS have found a true friend, for a friend in need is a friend indeed.

Today's resolution is the culmination of exhaustive and protracted discussions with the wider United Nations membership. The text of this finely balanced resolution is the result of the pivotal role Indonesia played in bringing together all parties in an effort to bridge differences while respecting stated positions. We wish to join others in acknowledging Indonesia's leadership in this regard.

Notwithstanding differences of view expressed by various delegations throughout the course of negotiations, I think we can all agree that the threat of climate change to the livelihood, well-being and security of all our peoples and countries is real and upon us. The revised resolution just adopted represents for all of us a collective compromise, but also, a united call for the relevant organs of the United Nations to intensify their efforts and give focused attention to a particular aspect of climate change that has yet to be fully discussed and considered at the United Nations.

In closing, allow me on behalf of the Pacific SIDS to place on record our debt of gratitude to all the sponsors, whose unwavering support nourished our spirits and gave us the strength to continue to the end. To all the States Members of the United Nations, we say that words are inadequate to describe what the heart feels, for it feels the truth. The unanimity of the support has dignified today's proceedings, and the consensus resolution is a legacy that is rightly the Assembly's and ours to claim.

The President of the General Assembly came to our aid when we needed it most and he spared no effort to ensure that Pacific islands concerns were at centre stage, notwithstanding the multitude of global crises competing for our Organization's attention and time.

The facilitation roles of the Secretariat and all the unsung heroes behind the scenes have not gone unnoticed, and we warmly acknowledge their efforts.

Finally, to our Pacific island States and peoples on whose behalf this effort was first initiated, I say that I hope that we have not let them down. I hope that they have not misplaced their trust in us. We have taken the first and crucial step. We still have a long way to go before we can benefit from today's historic resolution. The United Nations is our sanctuary and our place of last resort, and we have every faith that it will not let us down in the long and uncharted road ahead.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): The fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly warned us of the adverse consequences of climate change and global warming, if left unchecked. That was two years ago. Unfortunately, today's statistics are much more serious and grim. Human-induced climate change is accelerating much faster and far beyond the IPCC's predictions.

The science is clear. Climate change is real. It knows no borders and has now become by far the most serious threat facing human security. While there is no longer a front line in the fight against climate change, for those countries like the Maldives and other small island developing States, with an average elevation of one metre above sea level, as well as for low-lying coastal areas across the globe, the situation may be much more precarious today than ever before. Thus, time is no longer a luxury that these countries can afford; nor can they afford to pick and choose where and when this important issue should be discussed.

Climate change-related conflicts are slowly beginning to emerge as water and other scarce resources are depleted, coastlines begin to recede, storms and floods become more frequent, and droughts are prolonged. As my delegation stated in the general debate of this Assembly in September, for the Maldives climate change "is not solely a development issue, but also a

moral, ethical, political, legal and human rights issue, as well as a grave security issue" (*A/63/PV.16, p. 40*).

It was against that backdrop that the Maldives took the initiative in 1987 to raise this issue before the Assembly. It was also the reason why the Maldives participated at a high level in the Security Council debate on this issue in 2007. It was the reason why the Maldives decided to raise this issue in the Human Rights Council last year, and it was also the reason why the Maldives unconditionally joined our brothers and sisters from the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS) in submitting the important resolution before us today.

Unlike two decades ago when we first raised the issue of the real threat of some of the low-lying SIDS, including the Maldives, disappearing from the face of the Earth due to global warming and sea-level rise, climate change is a better understood and documented phenomenon today. We have certainly taken our time in reaching scientific and political consensus on the nature and threat of climate change.

It is true that two decades of global action have not yielded the results that we expected. Yet we refuse to give up hope. We believe that a true partnership with a common and shared vision of commitment and multilateral solidarity can still guarantee our future. Indeed, we have the means and the resources; what is lacking is political will. As the Secretary-General has been stressing, we will have to seal the deal in Copenhagen. If we do not, it may be too late for some of us.

Before I conclude, let me take this opportunity to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Pacific SIDS for taking this important initiative. We commend them for this brave and courageous undertaking. The consensus adoption of resolution 63/281, sponsored by nearly 90 countries, signals the importance that the international community attaches to climate change and its possible security implications. We are fully convinced that the resolution will become an important milestone in the annals of the Assembly.

Mrs. Bianchi (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): Argentina understands and shares the concern of the small island developing States and other countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. In that respect, my country has always promoted appropriate treatment of that particular vulnerability.

However, as we have said on previous occasions, the appropriate context for addressing climate change is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, which implicates the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Commission on Sustainable Development, among others. Those bodies are competent to address this and related issues in a substantive way through due and harmonious cooperation in dealing with situations arising from the extreme consequences of climate change.

Finally, I wish to stress that the phenomenon of climate change must be addressed from the perspective of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, promoting a comprehensive approach to the root causes of the problem. That is why we believe that the Security Council is not the competent organ to address and consider this issue.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the adoption of resolution 63/281, which seeks to alert the international community to the adverse impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels and the threat that they pose to security. The resolution also calls on all relevant bodies of our Organization to step up their efforts in that area.

We thank Indonesia for its role in bringing the process to a successful conclusion, as well as the many small island States that were directly involved in drafting the resolution that we have adopted. In that regard, we shared and supported the concern expressed by the representative of Nauru on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States.

Here, we cannot fail to recall the decisive contribution of the Pacific small island developing States to the law of the sea. If we wish to identify a potential disaster situation, which is what is behind this resolution, it is sufficient to focus on the existing facts and to ask where the greatest risks and vulnerability lie and who are the most threatened. Given that reality, those States are entitled to be listened to. The evidence of the major glaciers melting in both hemispheres is irrefutable, and the sea level is rising. The Patagonian glaciers, which are the largest ice mass in the southern hemisphere after the Antarctic, have lost as much as

42 cubic kilometres of ice a year, which is equivalent to 17 million Olympic-size swimming pools.

Studies carried out in the Antarctic show that the ice is retreating at a rate of one metre a year and, in certain periods, 10 metres a year. According to those estimates, if the Antarctic peninsula ice were to disintegrate, it would trigger an increase of up to five metres in the level of the ocean. Bearing in mind that many small island States are only two metres above sea level, the implied security impact is obvious. The resolution we have just adopted therefore accurately reflects the international community's recognition of that phenomenon and represents an urgent appeal for collective and coordinated action, which we believe will earn the gratitude of future generations.

Mr. Sammis (United States of America): The United States applauds the adoption today of resolution 63/281, "Climate change and its possible security implications", and is pleased to join the list of sponsors that includes the original proponents of the resolution, namely, the Pacific small island developing States.

We are encouraged by the General Assembly's ability to achieve broad consensus on a resolution concerning the urgent issue of climate change, particularly in these crucial remaining months leading to the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen. We therefore express gratitude to the Pacific small island developing States and to all of our other negotiating partners for this collective negotiating effort in the General Assembly.

This past April, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton addressed representatives at the first preparatory session of the Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate in Washington, D.C. At that meeting, Secretary Clinton noted that

> "the crisis of climate change exists at the nexus of diplomacy, national security and development. It is an environmental issue, a health issue, an economic issue, an energy issue, and a security issue ... It threatens lives and livelihoods. Desertification and rising sea levels generate increased competition for food, water and resources. But we also have seen increasingly the dangers that these transpose to the stability of societies and Governments. We see how this can breed conflict, unrest and forced migration. So no issue we face today has broader long-term consequences or greater potential to alter the world for future generations."

Climate change is among the highest priorities of the Obama Administration, and Ambassador Rice has made advancing the climate change agenda one of her top priorities at the United Nations. The resolution adopted today reinforces the Member States' recognition that global climate change poses serious challenges to our planet and requires an urgent response and the widest possible cooperation by all countries, as well as intensified efforts by the United Nations system. The United States reaffirms its commitment to leadership in this global endeavour.

Mr. Rangel (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Nicaragua and join the consensus in welcoming the adoption of resolution 63/281, which ratifies our commitment to supporting the efforts of the small island developing States to adapt to the adverse impact of climate change, including through special financing, capacity-building and the transfer of appropriate technology, given their paucity of financial resources, high rates of poverty and the social problems linked to their vulnerability to the effects of climate change and related phenomena.

We wish, however, to reiterate our position concerning the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 63/281, which refers to the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, paragraphs 26 and 27 of which refer to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In the understanding that this reference is addressed to States parties to the Convention, we stress the fact that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is not a State party to that instrument, and that the standards of the Convention do not apply to it under international customary law, except for any provision that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has recognized or will explicitly recognize in its domestic legislation. Thus, the aforementioned paragraph is not binding on our country.

Mr. Pálsson (Iceland): As a sponsor, my delegation is very pleased that consensus was established on today's resolution. The text may fall short of the expectations of some, but the patience and hard work of the original drafters, the Pacific small island developing States, have finally borne fruit. For the first time, we now have a General Assembly resolution that recognizes, with the full backing of the entire United Nations membership, the possible link between climate change and security. That is an accomplishment, and my delegation highly appreciates the show of flexibility by the different groups and countries involved that made this achievement possible.

The adverse impacts of climate change on food security, water availability and the loss of land in low-lying coastal States and islands due to rising sea levels are no longer subject to dispute. It is also recognized that such impacts can lead to forced migration and give rise to tensions over access to land and natural resources. Therefore, it is high time that the issue of climate change and security be given the attention it deserves.

My delegation certainly looks forward to future consideration of this important issue based on the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General that the General Assembly has requested through its resolution today.

Mrs. Pessôa (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the agreement reached on today's resolution and appreciates the efforts of all Member States in the negotiations that led to this consensus text. Despite some shortcomings in the text before us, Brazil joins the consensus out of respect for and solidarity with the small island developing States and in recognition that we are all vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Adaptive capacity is directly related to the level of social and economic development, as pointed out in the fourth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC also indicates that even if the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere were stabilized at current levels, thermal expansion of the world's oceans alone would trigger sea-level rise in the coming centuries.

Among those most threatened by these adverse impacts are small island developing States. Their vulnerability, like that of many developing countries, arises from the lack of adequate resources, technology, capacity and knowledge for improving adaptive capacity to such climate change-related phenome sea-level rise. In that bleak scenario, hope li enabling the vulnerable to build resilience in ord avoid humanitarian catastrophes.

This is further reason why the internat commitments under the United Nations Frame Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Pro should be fulfilled. Actions by all will be ne according to the principle of common but different responsibilities and respective capabilities. Devel countries, which have caused current and f climate change through over 200 years of pollu bear a particular responsibility to reduce emission support developing countries' actions to adapt to mitigate climate change through additional finan and technology transfer.

Brazil acknowledges the interdependence indivisibility of the concepts of development, sec and human rights as stated, inter alia, in principle the Rio Declaration on Environment and Develop and in the Outcome Document of the 2005 W Summit (resolution 60/1). That is precisely attempts to shift the focus of the debate development to security should be avoided.

There is a clear link between climate change development, established by sound scientific rese There is also a clear link between development security. There is no direct linkage, however, bet climate change and security. Determining whet given environmental impact gives rise to consequ that might represent a threat to security remains a complex task. Thus, the consensus on this text sh not be construed as a recognition of a link bet climate change and security. Brazil reiterates commitment to tackle climate change and its ad impacts in a constructive and equitable manner.

The universal interest in climate change and related implications demands that the main forum an overall political appraisal of the matter remai General Assembly, where all Member States equally represented and which has the power to dis any issue or matter. We should stave off encroach by other bodies on the issues of the General Assem

The General Assembly should send a st message of support for the United Nations Frame Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Prot In preparation of the fifteenth Conference of Parties, a delicate negotiation process is currently u

way under those bodies. We must carefully measure how to debate issues under consideration therein, so as to retain the authority of the Convention and its Kyoto Protocol and also move forward and constructively in the preparation for Conference of the Parties.

Mr. Liu Yuyin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We understand the concerns of countries with respect to climate change. As a developing country, China too is a victim of climate change. We are willing to discuss the issue, and have taken an active part in such discussions in a variety of institutions and forums. In the final analysis, climate change is an issue of sustainable development rather than a security issue, and it should be addressed by international bodies charged to consider sustainable development.

Ultimately, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the context for substantive negotiations on this issue. Within the United Nations, it should be discussed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

In responding to climate change, it is necessary to uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, as established by the Framework Convention. That reflects an important consensus regarding the response to climate change and provides the basis for maintaining the global partnership in this respect.

The international community is now engaged in negotiations on the implementation of the Bali Road Map and on strengthening the comprehensive, effective and sustained implementation of the Framework Convention and its Kyoto Protocol, with a view to a positive outcome at the United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Copenhagen at the end of this year. We do not want to see the resolution's request for a report of the Secretary-General having a negative impact on that negotiating process.

China is fully aware of the severity and urgency of the issue of climate change. In a responsible spirit regarding the long-term development of humankind, China has steadfastly followed the path of sustainable development. It has issued and implemented a national plan for responding to climate change and has adopted policies, measures and actions in an active effort to respond to that phenomenon. We shall continue our tireless efforts and active contributions in our response to climate change.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 107.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.

A/63/
PV.86

Readex
Fiche

United Nations A/63/PV.86

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

86th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 June 2009, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 4

Election of the President of the General Assembly

Election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session

The President: In accordance with rule 30 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I now invite members of the General Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

May I recall that, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 33/138 of 19 December 1978, the President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session should be elected from among the African States.

In that connection, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of February 2009 that the Group has endorsed His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for the presidency of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

Taking into account the provisions of paragraph 16 of General Assembly decision 34/401, I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya elected by acclamation President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

Please allow me to congratulate my brother His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, the Minister for African Union Affairs of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election as the President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I know that Mr. Treki assumes this honour with the same passion and determination that have inspired my presidency. I am sure that his presidency will continue to press for the revitalization of this body as it seeks to restore its authority and leadership on the world stage during these perilous times.

I am reminded that our tenure in this position is brief. I assure the President-elect that I will be, with great pleasure, available to assist him and his team in any way he sees fit as he prepares for next September, so that the urgent work before us can proceed seamlessly into the next session. I trust that all of us will assist our Libyan brother as he prepares to assume the honour and responsibility of the Assembly presidency.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, who has just been elected President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session, to take the floor.

Mr. Treki (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to express my thanks and appreciation for the confidence that the General Assembly has placed in my country and in my person by electing me by acclamation President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. My special thanks are due to the African Group, which

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

09-36482 (E)

Please recycle

supported my nomination and provided me with encouragement. It is indeed my honour to represent the Group by assuming this important position.

This choice is a tribute to my country, its people and its leader. It is also an expression of appreciation for Libya's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and its effective contribution to the realization of international peace and security, especially on my continent of Africa. However, at the same time, it places a moral commitment on our shoulders to further advancing the achievement of the United Nations purposes. For my part, I will make every possible effort to achieve those goals, in consultation and cooperation with all Member States.

I am truly happy to find myself once again among a large number of friends. I worked with many of them for many years in this Hall, and I will be honoured indeed to work with them again for an entire year.

I would like to thank my dear friend, President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for the frank and sincere way in which he has shared his experience with me. Undoubtedly, his cooperation with and advice to me during the transitional period will prove most important as I conduct the work of the sixty-fourth session. I take this opportunity to commend his efforts in leading the General Assembly to respond effectively to a large number of pressing issues.

I wish also to express my happiness with the welcome and encouragement bestowed upon me by my dear friend, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whom I have had the pleasure to know and whose admirable character I have appreciated for many years. I admire his leadership of the United Nations, his perseverance and his quick responses to the exigencies of urgent matters. I wish to reassure him that I will cooperate with him and benefit from his experience in seeking the best ways to address the priority issues facing the United Nations.

The world has gone through many cruel and bitter stages, including a phase of colonialism and slavery, which embodies oppression in its cruelest forms. The peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America were the victims. Successive wars were fought, chief among which were the First and Second World Wars. The peoples of small and large countries alike paid the highest price for those wars in terms of destruction, material losses and hundreds of thousands of human lives lost.

Following the Second World War, the peoples of the world saw a glimmer of hope in the establishment of the United Nations as an end to their suffering and the beginning of a new era of security, peace, justice, equality and development. An era of decolonization and independence dawned for small nations, with the United Nations playing a major role in its achievement. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, ushering in a new era focused on respect for human individuals, their dignity and right to life. Despite the defects and shortcomings of the United Nations, it deserves to be commended for its many achievements, especially in the humanitarian field.

The countries that emerged victorious from the Second World War had the lion's share in leading the establishment of the United Nations. The Charter was drafted to give the victorious countries rights not accorded to other States. This represented a major defect, especially with respect to the Security Council. The world, however, has evolved considerably since then; criteria have changed and a multipolar structure has emerged. It is no longer possible for the United Nations, with a membership of 192 countries, to remain the Organization it was when it had only 50 Members. The need to reform the United Nations system has emerged, especially vis-à-vis the role of the General Assembly and the need to grant it full authority to shoulder its responsibilities in the march of human progress.

With the emergence of the United Nations, the peoples of the world believed that they would enjoy peace and prosperity. Regrettably, however, wars proliferated, although they have been confined mostly to the regional and local levels. Competition among the major Powers has played a role in their inflammation. Thousands, if not millions, of victims have fallen all over the world. Military expenditure has increased, and military budgets have risen into the trillions of dollars. The small countries have felt obliged to increase their military capabilities at the expense of their development and the welfare of their peoples. Weapons of mass destruction have proliferated and the entire world has felt threatened. Although the major Powers, which possess nuclear weapons, have called for disarmament, they have not set a good example for other countries by taking the initiative to dismantle their own weapons of mass destruction. Hence, the call

to discard weapons of mass destruction has been met with barely any response.

The exorbitant amounts spent on arms could have been spent to reduce poverty, fight diseases and assist poor peoples in the field of development. Millions of people suffer from hunger; hundreds of millions are deprived of their right to education and suffer from disease, with no access to medicine. Poverty rates have risen, with repercussions for small nations that have suffered greater instability as they experience military coups and rebel movements, hampering their development and increasing their torment. The world can enjoy no peace, being divided between poor and rich, with the gap between the two widening. Furthermore, peace cannot prevail in the world while some peoples live under foreign occupation and suffer the consequences of racism. Peace can prevail only within a framework of justice and respect for human rights regardless of one's religion, race, colour or nationality.

The time has come for us to understand that all wars are wrong and sinful. We should work together to avert war through the administration of justice in order to safeguard human lives and preserve human dignity. The only war worth relentlessly fighting, with the participation of all, is that against fatal diseases, poverty, hunger and illiteracy.

Undoubtedly, many challenges lie ahead that we must make a concerted effort to meet through the United Nations. United Nations reform in all its aspects — especially reform of the Security Council and revitalization of the General Assembly — must continue to be one of our priorities. We should make every effort to achieve it as soon as possible. Indeed, the realization of peace and security through the administration of justice and putting an end to wars is a core purpose of the United Nations. It is a responsibility to be shouldered by all Member States.

Furthermore, we have no choice but to continue to address the issue of climate change firmly and effectively through cooperation among Member States in order to make the General Assembly an effective instrument for successfully advancing the current negotiations on climate change and for establishing a new framework for our future work based on our achievements to date and our envisaged goals.

The world financial and economic crisis remains of major concern and requires greater effort in the search for new, effective methods to tackle the crisis, mitigate its impact and achieve sustainable economic growth and development, taking into account the negative effects of the crisis on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals, especially in our continent, Africa.

It is imperative that we stand firmly for the realization of human rights. Such an undertaking cannot be achieved solely through rhetorical statements, but requires the provision of the basic necessities for a dignified life, such as food, medicine, clean drinking water, educational and health services and the means to fight dangerous diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We can do so only through solidarity and joint coordination so as to create a better world in which all enjoy peace, security, and a decent standard of living, and in which the basic rights and freedom of all are respected.

As I have been chosen to preside over the next session of the General Assembly, I would like to assure all Members that I will be at their disposal in our joint effort to enhance and strengthen the United Nations and its bodies. I count on the assistance and cooperation of every Member of the United Nations and will not align myself with any party or group. My only alignment will be with justice, security, peace and the common interests of the entire international community. I will cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Secretariat for the common good.

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General: I congratulate His Excellency Ali Abdussalam Treki on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Instead of welcoming him, I should really welcome him back. Our new President is already very familiar with the United Nations. He has already served three times as his country's United Nations Ambassador, most recently in 2003. His other diplomatic assignments have placed him at the heart of the United Nations agenda, and, in his current capacity as Libya's Minister for African Union Affairs, he has been working on pressing matters of mutual concern to the United Nations and the African Union, including Darfur.

That wide-ranging diplomatic experience will be invaluable as he presides over the General Assembly. From climate change to hunger, from the economic

crisis to the urgent need to reach the Millennium Development Goals, the Assembly will be challenged to forge new levels of international cooperation to solve our common problems. My own experience tells me that the Assembly can rise to that challenge. Members will recall that I served as Chef de Cabinet to the President of the General Assembly in 2001 and 2002. That session convened at a time of international upheaval. Despite the turmoil, Member States were able to achieve consensus on many important issues.

Now, as we face new problems and threats, Minister Treki's leadership will be crucial if the Assembly is to respond with unified action. We must also keep adapting and improving our Organization to better live up to the ideas of the Charter and the demands of the times.

I congratulate our current President, His Excellency Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, on his valuable contribution, and I anticipate a smooth transition to the new leadership of the General Assembly. I look forward to working closely with the President-elect and the entire membership towards our shared goal of a more effective United Nations so that we can better serve the people who need us most.

I congratulate the President-elect once again on his election and I wish him every success as he takes up his formidable responsibilities.

The President: I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Swaziland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. Nhleko (Swaziland): I would like to say a few words with the understanding that the issue will be dealt with in our next formal meeting. On behalf of the African Group, I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep condolences to the Government and the people of Gabon on the loss of President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba. We also pray that God Almighty will reach out to the family in this hour of bereavement. May his soul rest in peace.

It is my singular honour to address this Assembly on behalf of the African Group on yet another day of triumph of the international system. I have the further honour to extend my warm congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, a true son of Africa, on his election by acclamation as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

The election of Mr. Treki marks the true commitment of his country, Libya, and, by extension, of the African continent, to the United Nations system and to the virtues of multilateralism. His richly decorated experience and highly illustrious career in the international setting speak for themselves. He has been a true soldier in the struggle for the common good, firm in his resolve to carry out his duties with the utmost integrity. The fact that Mr. Treki has served in New York at various points in time is testimony that his election could not have come at a better time. Mr. Treki's experience will be placed on a higher level of engagement, and I trust that the principles of multilateralism and solemn commitment to international collectivity will be given added impetus.

The President-elect has come at a time of immense anxiety in the world. Economies are dwindling, financial systems are crumbling and poverty levels are reaching record highs. Solutions are being sought through different perspectives at all levels of decision-making and many times there are different perspectives on how best to solve our most common problems. Generally, the plot is thickening. This is a time of reckoning. It is definitely not a time to consider self-interest. In that regard, we have full confidence that the President-elect will work through these challenges with confidence, tenacity and fortitude.

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to reach out to Mr. Treki and assure him of the full cooperation of the Group as he carries out his day-to-day duties. In the same vein, I trust that other formations in the United Nations will do the same, with a view to ensuring the best cooperation that can be achieved. For this reason, the African Group wishes Mr. Treki all success as he navigates the troubled waters of our challenging world and reaffirms its active participation in all initiatives that seek to better the lives of our people, whom we represent.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States.

Mr. Al-Jarman (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the Group of Asian States and to congratulate the President-elect of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam

Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs and former Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Chairman of the African Union Executive Council and representative of the Group of African States. His election by acclamation today is a clear reflection of our full confidence in his ability to lead our work and confirmation of his vast experience and exceptional qualifications, which will enhance his leadership of the General Assembly at its forthcoming session.

The sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly will convene in September 2009, at a time when the international community is facing new challenges and difficulties resulting from the aggravated global financial and economic crisis, in addition to other ongoing issues and challenges which hold great importance for the international community. Those include, inter alia, reform of the United Nations, in particular reform of the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly, climate change, food security, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the eradication of poverty and disease. These raise considerable obstacles to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. They are all issues we will continue to address during the sixty-fourth session.

The Asian Group is fully confident that the President-elect, His Excellency Mr. Ali Treki, has the necessary multidimensional experience and qualifications to successfully lead Member States through the important and complex issues they are facing and to maintain the momentum in order to attain the main objectives of this body: lasting peace, security and prosperity for all the peoples of the world. I wish to assure the President-elect that the Asian Group will extend its full support to him as he discharges his duties as President of the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. We wish him every success in his new mission.

Finally, on behalf of the Asian Group, I take this opportunity to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to the current President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, for his tireless efforts and commitment during the sixty-third session. His extensive skill, wise leadership and dedication have been essential for the success of the current session of the General Assembly during this important and sensitive phase of its work.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Tašovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): On behalf of the Group of Eastern European States, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on his election as President of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session. The election of Mr. Ali Treki as President of the Assembly for its sixty-fourth session is not only recognition of his outstanding personal qualities and experience, but also of his unrelenting efforts to make our world a better place.

We are fully convinced that in assuming the complexity and the responsibility of the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, which we have entrusted to him, his political and diplomatic experience and leadership skills will contribute to successful management of a number of important and vital ongoing reforms that have become imperative to the future of the Organization and of the international community.

On behalf of the Eastern European Group, I would like to assure Mr. Treki that our Group stands ready to support his initiatives and assist him in all his undertakings to further strengthen the United Nations and to attain the objectives set out in the United Nations Charter, within a framework of transparency and full respect for all views and positions.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. García González (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to express our most sincere congratulations to Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on his election by acclamation to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki is an experienced diplomat who has served in many posts of importance for his country's international relations, including at the United Nations.

For that reason, we are convinced that his leadership and negotiating skills will contribute to

achieving major advances for peace and security, development, international cooperation, respect and promotion of human rights, reform of the United Nations and protection of the environment, among other prominent issues on the agenda of the sixty-fourth session.

In addition, in the context of the unprecedented financial and economic crisis confronting the world today, and given the flaws and gaps in international financial governance, our regional group believes that it is important and urgently needed for the General Assembly to take a leading and proactive role in finding a solution to this crisis and in international economic affairs.

Developing countries, including those of Latin America and the Caribbean, bear the burden of a crisis for which they are not responsible, but which nevertheless is leading to major setbacks to the economic and financial stability of those countries and jeopardizing the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In this context, our regional group trusts that the President-elect of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly, Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, will rise to the challenge of the circumstances and guide us appropriately in navigating these and other challenges that we will face during the forthcoming session.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, I would like to extend sincere congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the current Minister for African Union Affairs of his country on his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session. Mr. Treki has served his country and the African region with distinction and will bring extensive political experience to the leadership of the General Assembly — leadership that will build confidence among Member States and different groupings. This will be important for bringing the reform process forward and in dealing with a host of challenging issues facing the international community today.

We look forward to continuing to work with incumbent President Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann and will assist to the best of our endeavours in ensuring a smooth transition until our new President takes over in September. We assure the President-elect of our full support in his important duties of serving Member States and we wish him every success in doing so.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain, who will speak on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome the opportunity to address the Assembly today on behalf of the Arab Group to warmly congratulate the President-elect of the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session, His Excellency Mr. Ali Abdussalam Treki, Minister for African Union Affairs of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and representative of the African Group, which has put its full confidence in him to represent them in this Assembly. The members of the Arab Group are also proud of the fact that Mr. Treki is part of their Group, as his country is at the crossroads of two worlds: the African and the Arab. We believe that his election today will serve to further strengthen these links.

Mr. Treki's election by acclamation of the Member States demonstrates their full confidence in his abilities and in his lengthy political and diplomatic experience as a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and in other important positions that amply qualify him for his new post.

The upcoming session of the General Assembly will be held at a major turning point. The reform process of the United Nations, especially the reform of the Security Council and its relationship with the General Assembly, among others, continues to be the focus of major interest for all Member States. This reform is, as I said, a turning point in the history of our international Organization, which faces crucial challenges for the future, especially the need to promote international peace and security, including the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the implementation of the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant international resolutions. We will also have to face other challenges, especially the international economic crisis, climate change, food security, reduction in nuclear stockpiles and the fight against poverty and disease, all of which are of great

concern to humankind and call for our unrelenting efforts.

The key role that the President of the General Assembly can play in promoting the agenda of the international community will enable us to respond to all of these challenges. He is well prepared to fulfil his noble mission thanks to his lengthy experience, his leadership and his clear vision, qualities that we have witnessed in Mr. Treki throughout the long decades of his international diplomatic career. We trust that the President-elect will give all of these issues the greatest attention and will direct the work of the sixty-fourth session with vigour thanks to his in-depth knowledge of all of these issues and his wealth of experience. These traits make him well able to address these issues at the international, regional and national levels.

The Arab Group will fully support the President-elect in the fulfilment of his role as head of an Assembly that represents all Member States. We thank the President of the sixty-third session of the Assembly for his tireless efforts throughout the session. His wisdom and his ability were the key to achieving positive results in recent months.

The President: We have thus concluded our consideration of agenda item 4.

Drawing of lots for the seating protocol for the sixty-fourth regular session

The President: As announced in the *Journal*, we will now proceed to the drawing of lots to determine the Member State that will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fourth session. In accordance with the established practice, the Secretary-General draws the name of one Member State from a box containing the names of the States members of the General Assembly. The delegation whose name has been drawn will occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall, and the other countries will follow in English alphabetical order. The same order will be observed in the Main Committees.

I now invite the Secretary-General to proceed with the drawing of lots.

Having been drawn by lot by the Secretary-General, Cambodia was chosen to occupy the first seat in the General Assembly Hall at the sixty-fourth session.

The President: I wish to inform members that, immediately after the adjournment of this meeting, consecutive meetings of the First Committee, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Committees will be held in this Hall to elect the members of their respective Bureaux.

Thereafter, the General Assembly will hold its 87th plenary meeting, to elect the 21 Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly for the sixty-fourth session.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.